The 8 Hermetic Principles attributed to Hermes Trismegistus

1 - The Principle of Mentalism "The Universe is Mind"

At the heart of all creation lies the eternal truth: the All is Mind. Everything that exists, from the vast galaxies to the tiniest particle, originates in consciousness. Reality itself is the manifestation of thought, a reflection of infinite intelligence shaping itself into form.
The universe is not an accidental assembly of matter and energy; it is a living thought, a conscious idea, flowing through time and space. Every star that shines, every wave that crashes, every breath that stirs the heart is an expression of this cosmic mind.
In Hermetic philosophy, understanding this law means realizing that the mind is the master key of creation. Thoughts are not ephemeral; they are forces that shape worlds, internal and external alike. The alchemist, the magician, the seeker all wield the power of the mind to harmonize, transmute, and create.
The material world is but the shadow of thought made visible. To change one's reality, one must first change the mind. The inner landscape dictates the outer landscape: beliefs, intentions, and imagination set the blueprint for all manifestation.
The Principle of Mentalism teaches the sacred responsibility of thought:

- Focused mind creates form.
- Pure thought elevates the spirit.
- Distorted thought manifests limitation.

The Sun, the Moon, and the stars are but thoughts in the mind of the All, and human consciousness is a microcosmic mirror of this divine intellect. By mastering the mind, the alchemist learns to navigate both worlds, to transmute perception into reality, and to bring the invisible into the visible.
To live in accordance with this principle is to take command of one's own consciousness, to become aware that nothing occurs by chance, and that all events, all circumstances, and all phenomena are reflections of the mind's infinite power.
The true Hermetic practitioner knows that the first laboratory is the mind. All creation begins there, and all transformation begins there. Thought is the wand, intention is the fire, and reality is the manifestation of the alchemist's will.
Thus, the Principle of Mentalism reveals the ultimate truth: to understand the universe, one must first understand the mind, for the mind is the canvas on which the cosmos paints itself.

2 - The Principle of Correspondence "As Above, So Below"

This principle is the silent architect of the cosmos, the thread that weaves the microcosm and the macrocosm into one living tapestry. It teaches that the patterns and laws that govern the stars and galaxies are mirrored in the heart of man, the smallest atom, and the currents of thought that flow within.
The universe is not a collection of isolated fragments; it is a unified organism, a reflection of itself at every scale. The mountains and rivers echo the rise and fall of human ambition. The cycles of the Moon and Sun resonate with our own emotional tides. Every phenomenon in nature whispers a secret about the hidden workings of the self.
In the laboratory, this law reveals itself as a sacred mirror. When the alchemist purifies a metal, he is not merely transforming matter; he is reflecting and refining the soul. The lead becomes gold, ignorance becomes wisdom, base desire is transmuted into spiritual illumination. Every change in the outer world is the shadow of an inner truth, and every insight within reverberates outward.

The Sun corresponds to the spirit and illumination of the heart.
The Moon mirrors the mind, the cycles of thought, and the rhythm of emotion.
Mercury embodies the fluidity of thought and the subtle currents of intuition.
To understand this principle is to perceive unity in multiplicity to see order in apparent chaos, and to recognize that the divine is present not only in distant stars but in every motion, every breath, every heartbeat.
For the true Hermetic practitioner, the world is never separate from the self. The mountains are teachers, the rivers are guides, the stars are maps of the soul. By observing the external, the alchemist reads the inner; by refining the inner, the world transforms in harmony.
The Principle of Correspondence is a bridge, a law of mirrors:

- What is above resonates below.
- What is without echoes within.
- Every action, thought, and emotion is part of a cosmic dialogue, a reflection of eternal patterns.

To master this law is to stand at the center of creation, seeing the reflection of all things in oneself, and knowing that every transformation begins inside. The universe is a mirror, the self is the reflection, and in this sacred correspondence, the alchemist discovers the path to wisdom, power, and unity.

3 - The Principle of Vibration "Nothing Stands Still"

This principle whispers the eternal truth that all is in motion, that nothing rests, nothing is static. Every atom, every thought, every emotion vibrates, hums, and pulses with a frequency unique to its essence. The universe is not a silent void; it is a living symphony, each element a note, each event a chord, each consciousness a melody.
To understand Vibration is to perceive the subtle energies behind all things. Matter is but condensed energy, form is but slowed motion, and even seemingly solid objects are alive with invisible dance. The mountains, the rivers, the air, the stars all are in perpetual rhythm, echoing the heartbeat of creation.
Within the alchemist, this principle manifests as the understanding that thoughts and feelings are not inert. Every idea vibrates, every emotion resonates. Negative thoughts create dissonance; elevated consciousness harmonizes with the divine rhythm. By mastering vibration, the alchemist learns to attune himself to higher frequencies, to shift states of being, to transmute base feelings into clarity, fear into courage, ignorance into insight.
In alchemy, this is the dance of energy through matter: metals quiver under heat, liquids flow with invisible currents, spirits rise and mingle with the breath of life. In life, it is the flow of human energy, the subtle currents that attract or repel, that heal or harm, that create or destroy.
To live in accordance with the Law of Vibration is to recognize that mastery is not control, but resonance. By raising one's frequency, one aligns with higher truths; by lowering it, one sinks into limitation. The alchemist learns that every change begins in the invisible world of motion and thought, and that by vibrating consciously, he can shape reality itself.
All is energy, all is vibration. To master this law is to become the conductor of your own symphony, orchestrating harmony from the eternal movement of the universe.

4 - The Principle of Polarity "Everything Has Its Opposite"

This principle unveils the sacred duality at the heart of all existence. Every phenomenon, every thought, every force carries within it two poles, two extremes hot and cold, light and dark, joy and sorrow, life and death. Nothing exists in isolation; everything is defined by contrast.

Polarity is the law that reveals the interconnectedness of opposites, showing that extremes are simply different degrees of the same essence.
To the alchemist, this law is a key to transformation. By recognizing that all opposites are manifestations of the same energy, he learns to navigate between them rather than being trapped by them. Fear contains courage, weakness contains strength, darkness contains light. To change a situation, one need only shift one's perception, sliding along the spectrum of polarity to reach balance.
In the laboratory, the Principle of Polarity manifests as the union of opposites: hot metals cooled, acids neutralized by bases, volatile spirits captured and crystallized. The transformation of substances mirrors the transformation of the soul: conflicting desires reconciled, contradictions harmonized, internal chaos transmuted into clarity.
On the inner plane, polarity governs thought and emotion. Every negative feeling can be reversed, every limitation transcended, if one understands its opposite is already present. Anger and patience, despair and hope, rigidity and fluidity they are two sides of the same coin, and mastery comes from embracing both.
The Principle of Polarity teaches the alchemist to see beyond conflict, to perceive unity in duality. The dance of opposites is not to be resisted but understood, for creation itself is born from tension. In the silent center between extremes, the philosopher finds equilibrium, where transformation becomes possible, and the essence of the Great Work reveals itself.
To live by this law is to move fluidly across the spectrum of life, to turn seeming obstacles into allies, to transform duality into the harmonious rhythm of existence. Every extreme holds the seed of its opposite, and the wise alchemist learns to draw from both to achieve mastery.

5 - The Principle of Rhythm "The Eternal Flow of Cycles"

This principle reveals the cosmic pulse that flows through all existence. Everything rises and falls, moves and pauses, flows and returns. Birth follows death, day follows night, summer follows winter, joy follows sorrow. Rhythm is the heartbeat of creation, the invisible current that guides both the cosmos and the inner world of the soul.
To the alchemist, understanding rhythm is understanding timing. Nothing in nature or spirit happens outside the flow. Resistance to this eternal movement brings suffering; harmony brings mastery. Every event, every emotion, every phase of life is part of a greater wave, a cycle of ascent and descent, expansion and contraction, creation and dissolution.
In the laboratory, rhythm is mirrored in the processes of transformation: metals heated and cooled, substances dissolved and recrystallized, energies balanced through cycles of activity and rest. The Great Work unfolds not in haste but in stages, each necessary, each reflecting the universal cadence.
Within the self, rhythm governs thought, emotion, and spirit. Periods of struggle and despair are as essential as moments of clarity and triumph. The wise alchemist does not resist the ebb and flow of inner life but learns to move with it, rising on the currents of insight and surrendering during moments of collapse, knowing that every descent carries the seed of a new ascent.
This principle teaches that life is not linear but oscillatory, a dance between extremes, a spiral where every return brings deeper understanding. Mastery of rhythm is mastery of timing, patience, and adaptation. The alchemist who aligns with the flow experiences not only efficiency and wisdom but freedom freedom from fear, from resistance, and from the illusion of control.
To live in accordance with the Principle of Rhythm is to attune oneself to the cycles of existence, to recognize that all phases dark or light, high or low are sacred, and to navigate them with awareness, grace, and power. In this eternal dance, the soul learns that nothing is wasted, everything returns, and all is part of the Great Work.

6 - The Principle of Cause and Effect "Every Action Has Its Echo"

This principle reveals the hidden web of causality that binds all things. Nothing happens by chance; every event, every thought, every choice sets into motion a chain of consequences, seen and unseen. The universe is not a playground of randomness it is a tapestry of interlinked causes and their effects.

To the alchemist, understanding this law is the key to mastery. By observing patterns and recognizing the roots of outcomes, one can act deliberately, shaping reality rather than being swept along by it. Every intention, every word, every act resonates outward, touching realms both material and spiritual.

In the laboratory, this law is reflected in precision and attention. Combine substances, and reactions inevitably follow. Heat or cold, acid or base every cause produces its corresponding effect. Mastery of matter requires understanding these relationships, predicting outcomes, and aligning actions with desired results.

Within the self, the Principle of Cause and Effect mirrors the inner life. Thoughts generate emotions; emotions drive actions; actions create reality. The alchemist learns that change begins within: purify thought, cultivate clarity, and the world will shift in harmony with the inner transformation. Neglect the mind, and chaos manifests externally.

This principle teaches accountability and intentionality. Life responds not to wishful thinking but to deliberate, conscious acts. Every challenge is an effect with a cause, every success a consequence of prior effort. The wise alchemist acts with foresight, knowing that mastery over cause leads to mastery over effect.

To live according to this principle is to move with purpose, to align intention with action, and to recognize the power of personal responsibility. The Great Work is not random; it is the deliberate unfolding of will through the matrix of cause and effect, where every choice echoes across the universe, shaping destiny with precision and grace.

7 - The Principle of Gender "The Dance of Masculine and Feminine"

This principle teaches that all things contain the dual forces of creation: the masculine and the feminine. These are not limited to physical sex, but are archetypal energies that exist in all matter, thought, and spirit. Every act of creation whether a universe, a work of art, or a transformation of the self arises from the harmonious interplay of these two forces.

Masculine energy is active, projective, and initiating. It drives action, sparks ideas, and gives shape to the unseen. Feminine energy is receptive, intuitive, and nurturing. It receives, molds, and brings to fruition what the masculine has set in motion. Neither is superior; both are essential, and the Great Work depends on their balance.

In the alchemical laboratory, this principle is mirrored through the union of opposites: the fixed and volatile, the dry and the moist, the spirit and the body. Only when these forces converge in harmony can transformation occur, producing the Philosopher's Stone or the quintessence of a substance.

Within the self, masculine and feminine energies manifest in thought and emotion, will and intuition, reason and feeling. The alchemist seeks to recognize, cultivate, and harmonize these forces, allowing creativity, insight, and transformation to flow naturally. Conflict, imbalance, or suppression of either energy blocks growth and clouds perception.

The Principle of Gender is also the secret of all creation. Every idea conceived, every project initiated, every vision brought into reality requires the marriage of these complementary forces. One provides direction; the other provides form. One inspires; the other nurtures. Together, they birth life, knowledge, and spiritual evolution.

To live in accordance with this law is to honor both energies within oneself and in the world. It is to act with initiative while remaining receptive, to create while allowing growth, to harmonize opposites within and without. The alchemist learns that the sacred dance of masculine and feminine is the eternal pulse of creation itself, and that true mastery comes when one moves gracefully within this divine interplay.

8 - The Principle of Unity "The Oneness of All"

This principle reveals the ultimate truth of existence: everything is one. All life, all matter, all thought, and all spirit are interconnected, expressions of a single, infinite source. Separation is an illusion; diversity is a play of the One manifesting in countless forms.
The universe is not a collection of independent objects, but a living, conscious whole. Every star, every particle, every heartbeat is a reflection of the same divine essence vibrating at its own frequency. When one understands this, one sees that every action, every thought, every intention ripples through the whole. Nothing exists in isolation.
In alchemy, the Principle of Unity is mirrored in the creation of the Philosopher's Stone, where all elements, principles, and opposites converge into a single, harmonious substance. This convergence is not an external act alone it reflects the inner integration of mind, body, and spirit, the reconciliation of opposites, and the recognition of one's connection to all things.
The alchemist realizes that to transform the outer world, one must first align the inner self. Every act of purification, every meditation, every conscious choice participates in the harmonization of the cosmos. The microcosm and macrocosm are not two they are one, eternally reflecting and shaping each other.
To live according to this principle is to see beyond division, to honor the sacred in all things, and to act with awareness that every gesture, thought, and word touches the greater whole. It is to move with compassion, wisdom, and understanding, recognizing that harming another is harming oneself, and nurturing another is nurturing the universe.
The Principle of Unity is the culmination of the Hermetic path. It teaches that the One manifests in the many, and the many return to the One. Mastery of this law is the realization that all creation, all experience, and all consciousness are interconnected threads in the infinite tapestry of existence. In living this truth, the alchemist stands fully awake, fully aligned, fully one with the eternal flow of life.

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